

Documents on Diplomacy: Resources

Section IV: Expansionism Diplomatic Terms & Historical Events

Diplomatic & Governmental Terms

Abolitionism The doctrine that calls for the abolition or ending of slavery.

Alliance A formal pact or agreement between nations, especially for the purpose of supporting each other against military threats from other nations, or in times of war.

Ally The term used to describe a nation which has entered into an agreement or treaty with another nation for the purposes of mutual support.

Ambassador The official representative from one country to another. An Ambassador is the highest ranking official assigned to live in a foreign country for an extended period of time. In the United States, an Ambassador is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The title of Ambassador was first used in the United States in 1893. Prior to that, the highest ranking American diplomats were Ministers Plenipotentiary.

Annexation The formal act by which a state incorporates conquered foreign territory within its own jurisdiction, illegally.

Bilateral Diplomacy involving two groups or countries.

Blockade An official action designed to prevent people or goods from moving from one place to another. A war measure that isolates some area of importance to the enemy.

Cabinet Department A department of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. Each department is headed by one of the President's top advisors, known as the Cabinet. The Department of State is the oldest Cabinet Department.

Canal A long, thin stretch of water that is created artificially as a passage for boats or for moving water from one place to another.

Cede To give something to someone else, such as territorial control, often unwillingly or being forced to do so.

Chargé d'Affaires The member of a diplomatic mission who takes charge of an embassy or legation during the temporary absence of its head. The chargé may also be the diplomat who acts as head of a country's lowest-level diplomatic mission that is neither an embassy nor a legation.

Commission A group of representatives or diplomats who are given authority to accomplish a specific task.

Constitution The document written by the Constitutional Convention in 1787 that defines the fundamental principles, laws, structure, functions, and limits of the Federal Government of the United States. It was ratified in 1788 and has been amended just 27 times.

Consul An official appointed by a government to protect its commercial interests and help its citizens in a foreign city.

Conventions A synonym for a treaty, used most often for multi-lateral agreements of general interest.

Diplomacy The term is used to describe the practice of conducting relations with other nations, such as negotiating treaties, alliances, or agreements.

Diplomat An individual who is appointed by a government to represent its interests and to conduct its relations with another government.

An Ambassador is the highest ranking U.S. Department of State diplomatic representative to another nation.

Diplomatic Corps Those engaged in on-going or specific official diplomatic efforts. Included are the Secretary of State, ambassadors, and special envoys to other nations and their staff members who support the work of diplomacy.

Diplomatic Mission An individual or group sent by a government to conduct negotiations or establish relations with another country. A diplomatic mission can be temporary or permanent.

Dispatches Official messages sent with speed between a government and its overseas diplomats or between nations.

Emancipation The process of giving people social or political rights.

Embassy The official headquarters of a government's Ambassador and other representatives to another country. It is usually located in the capitol of the other country. An Embassy is the highest level of diplomatic representation.

Embargo An official ban by a government preventing trade with another country. An order of a state forbidding ships to enter or leave its ports.

Encumbrance To weight someone down or make it difficult for a person to do something.

Envoy An agent sent by a government or ruler to transact diplomatic business.

Expansionism Increasing the amount of land controlled or governed by a country.

Extradition The practice of making someone return to a country (in which they have been accused of doing something illegal) for trial.

Foreign Policy The official views and policies of a government regarding its relations with other nations. In the United States, foreign policy is developed by the President, with the advice

of the Secretary of State and others, and is implemented by the Department of State and any other officials designated by the President.

Legation A diplomatic mission headed by a Minister whose title was "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary." A legation is the second level of diplomatic representation and is less important than an embassy.

Minister Plenipotentiary A diplomat with the authority to represent a head of state but of a lower status than an Ambassador. Until 1893, diplomats who headed American missions overseas only carried the title of Minister Plenipotentiary. The complete title is "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary."

Negotiate The term refers to discussions between individuals, groups, or nations that are conducted for the purpose of arriving at an agreement on a particular set of terms or actions.

Neutrality A legal status assumed unilaterally by a state during a time of war to stay out of the conflict.

Rebellion An attempt to remove a government or a leader by force.

Resistance Opposition to someone or something, especially a political or military opponent.

Revolution The overthrow of one government and its replacement by another.

Revolt An attempt to remove the government of a country by its some of its citizens, using force.

Sovereignty The authority of a state to govern itself.

Treaty A formal agreement between two or more countries or states, as in reference to terms of peace or trade and any limitations associated within the agreement.

Unilateral Involving only one group or country.

Important Places, Concepts, and Terms

Chinese Coolies: An historical term for manual laborers from Asia, dating back to 17th century India.

Fifty-four Forty, or Fight Democratic party slogan during the presidential campaign of 1844. "Fifty-four, forty" was the latitude of the Russian Alaska's southern boundary and represented the maximum American claim to the area. Great Britain and the United States negotiated a settlement of the border at the 49th parallel and avoided war.

Fort Blunder An American fort, begun in 1816, which was found to be located on Canadian territory due to a surveying error.

Fustian A very strong, thick, rough cotton cloth

Holy Alliance (1815) A coalition of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, which was founded to suppress political rebellion and revolution. President James Monroe's fears of possible Alliance interference in the Americas, lead to the Monroe Doctrine.

Hudson's Bay Company A North American fur trading company, incorporated in 1670. At one time, it was the largest landowner in the world. The company controlled all trade in the Pacific Northwest and discouraged American settlement until the first successful American wagon train reached the Willamette Valley in 1843. By 1846, Americans fully controlled all of the territory south of the 49th parallel.

London Punch A British weekly magazine of humor and satire. It was most influential during the 1840s and 1850s.

Manifest Destiny A 19th century American belief that the United States was destined to expand across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. It was used to justify the Mexican-American War in 1848.

Monroe Doctrine A policy of the United States Government forbidding European states to colonize or interfere with the countries of the Americas, first articulated in 1823. President Monroe said that any attempt to do so would be met with force.

Providential Nursery An expression referring to the United States Government as the benevolent protector and promoter of the individual states.

Road to Apostasy A Biblical phrase from I Corinthians often used to represent the wrong plan of action.

Scroll A long, thin role of paper, usually with writing on it.

Willamette Valley Today, the most populated part of the state of Oregon, located to the northwest. It developed as a major commercial hub when the Oregon country became the Oregon Territory.